

pluperl
April 11, 1984
PLU-PERFECT, BBS Version
by
Dick Reaser

Note: This is an attempt to give wider coverage to a series that I've started for the WLAAUG, SBACE, & HESEA-ACE newsletters. In case you don't belong to any of those clubs, you can "Get it here!!". (and probably faster). I write the column in Letter Perfect and use the File Utility to convert it to ATARI dos so that it can be easily uploaded. If you don't use Letter Perfect, then some of the imbedded control codes may not make much sense to you. I would appreciate your comments relative to this concept of news spreading. Of course, we have to see if the SYSOP will even "Put it up". If you can read this, he obviously did.

I've decided to start this regular(?) column to share some of the experiences I've had and heard about with regard to the LJK series of programs: Letter Perfect, Spell Perfect and Data Perfect. The idea for the column came from reading JACG's Hank Hirschfeld who is writing a column entitled "Perfecting Data Perfect".

I must tell you about my most recent success story. I keep the WLAAUG exchange newsletter records on Data Perfect. A couple of months ago this data-base began acting up. Although I could add records, delete records, print labels and reports; I was unable to compact, sort, or merge into Letter Perfect or into another Data Perfect database.

After many attempts I was unable to resolve the problem. In desperation I finally sent the data disk to LJK and they were kind enough to compact and re-sort the files and return the disk to me. Guess what, I was still unable to do those same functions above!!!

I then used a disk editor (Archiver/Editor) to look at how the records were stored on the disk with the hope of being able to somehow get an inkling as to what was going on. I compared perfectly working databases to the faulty one. What I found was that the records on the ok disks were all contiguous, sector after sector. LJK apparently doesn't use the last few bytes of each sector to point to the next sector with data on it as ATARI dos purports to do. The faulty disk had a string of "Hearts" (hex 00) every once in a while. There was information on several of the other sectors that didn't make much sense to me so I was unable to play with those areas.

How to get rid of the hearts?? I used the disk editor and replaced all the "Hearts" with the letter "e" (hex 65). I suppose I could have used any normal character, such as an asterisk. This, of course, screwed up the sequence as to what data was supposed to be in which field.

Another newsletter to the rescue!!
I used a program by Norm Draper of "DAL-ACE" that I found reprinted in "CURRENT NOTES" to convert the file to an ATARI DOS file. (Norm Draper's single and double disk versions are now in the club disk library and several BBS's as DP2AT1DR & DP2AT2DR respectively).

Then I used the LJK File Utility to convert this into a Letter Perfect file. I used Letter Perfect to edit out the extra "e"'s and make sure that

there was correct data in the correct sequence in the Letter Perfect file. I thought that I then would have to convert back to ATARI dos in order to "merge" the data back into the data-base, but I decided that I would try directly from the Letter Perfect file. It worked!!

For some reason, I had to change the data-base name extension from LP to DB the two places it occurred on track 14 or 15 using the disk editor. Interestingly enough Data Perfect didn't seem to care about the LP extender and worked fine by itself. It didn't cause any trouble until I tried to do a "Data Base Merge" into Letter Perfect for a form letter I was working on. It's possible that the LP extension got there from one of my earlier trials. (I didn't keep a very good log of my frustrations).

In looking back, I suspect that after changing the hearts, I probably could have changed the directory title extensions from DB to LP and it would have loaded into Letter Perfect without going through the conversion to ATARI dos and back. The first time I tried this doing that, only the first couple of records would transfer. (That was before I decided to change the "Hearts" into a regular character). I'll leave verification of this hypothesis as an "exercise for the student".

I am just thrilled that I was able to get the data-base to work again instead of re-typing all that data again. Total "keyboard time" may have been longer but it's more fun for me to edit and learn than to just type. If you have a Data Perfect data-base with similar symptoms, give this technique a try. It could really "Make your Day" as Clint Eastwood would say.

My current project is to use Letter Perfect to do some dot graphics with my daisy wheel printer. That way I can make up some custom letter heads and stuff like that. Hope to give the results next month. Have to con a couple of the newsletter editors to use the copy directly from my printer to illustrate the effect. (They only have Dot Matrix printers and are protective of their newsletter format ... besides, they only speak "Atari Writer")

Please send me any information you wish to share others about the "Perfect" programs and I'll include it in this column. You're certainly also welcome to submit articles directly to the Editor. I'll slip in excerpts of articles from other newsletters too as I gather them up.

Dick "I'm Perfect" Reaser

pluper2
April 13, 1984
PLU-PERFECT, BBS Version
by
Dick Reaser

Data Perfect Merges

Ever have trouble merging data from One Data Perfect database into another Data Perfect data base??? Ever cried over the data that goes into the wrong fields??? Especially when a "name" field tries to go into a "date" field??? Does the screen keep saying "invalid entry"???

All your problems have been because you've been reading and following the instructions in the manual!!!

The instructions and examples on the various pages (55, 137, 139 and 140) totally contradict each other. I'm talking about the updated manual I paid \$15.00 for to replace my original manual which was marked "Preliminary" when I bought the program. The update was very useful as a band-aid but still falls far short of the mark in accuracy and usable information. Now, back to merging.

The computer takes one record at a time from the old data base (referred to in screen prompts as "Disk". It takes this record one field at a time in numerical order (0,1,2, ...,N) from the old data base and puts them into the new data base (referred to in screen prompts as "Source", confusing isn't it?).

It puts these old (Disk) fields into the new (Source) data base as defined by your response to the "Order" screen prompt. Your response should be the field numbers of the new (Source) data base which will use data from the old (Disk) listed in the sequence that they are coming from the old (Disk) data base. Remember, they always come in the old field numbers numerical order.

What you are doing is assigning a field of the new (Source) data base to each field of the old (Disk) data base. If a field will not be used from the old data base, you assign it to field 99 of the new data base. You must account for every field of the old (Disk) data base. You do not account for every field of the new (Source) data base.

EXAMPLE
(Order: 0,1,99,12,4,3)

Old field #	goes into New field #	"Order"
0	0	0
1	1	1
2	not used	99
3	12	12
4	4	4
5	3	3

Hope this helps clarify the situation for you. It works for me. I figured it out in the early throes of my anguish dealing with salvaging the data base fiasco described in pluper1.

pluper3
April 22, 1984
PLU-PERFECT, BBS Version
by
Dick Reaser

Mix & Match: Letter Perfect, Spell Perfect, Word Star,
Atari, DEC Rainbow, S-100, CP/M, CP/M-86, LJK Dos, Atari Dos
Hayes and US Robotics

(or "How I avoided 17 pages of retyping")

Some time back you may have seen some of my queries on the BBS's regarding the compatibility of CP/M and ATARI X-Modem transfer of text files. Here is the story behind those questions.

My church decided to revise their 17 page constitution which only existed in hardcopy (paper) form. It was time to get it on disk, so that modifications (this one as well as future ones) could be done with a word processor. Guess who had the only computer in the congregation!!! Yep, me, the guy who hates to type. We finally found a volunteer typist, but it was "inconvenient" for her to come to my house (She thinks I'm a dirty old man like Dale Bryant). However, she did have access to a DEC Rainbow computer using Wordstar at her work place during lunch and at break times. I suggested that she go ahead and get started and somehow we could get it into my computer for editing, spell checking, formatting and printing using Letter Perfect.

The next sequence of events is somewhat involved, but look at all the typing I didn't have to do.

A friend of mine in her office did a "wire to wire" (RS-232 to RS-232 port without benefit of Modem) transfer from the DEC CP/M-86 5 1/4" disk to a standard 8" CP/M Microbyte computer disk. Then he took the disk home to his S-100 "home brew" computer with 8" CP/M disk drives. He thought that he had a CP/M ASCII X-Modem program to transmit the file to my Amodplus program at receiving end, but he didn't after all. He broke the file into 3 parts in the hope that the smaller files would fit into my Amodplus buffer one at a time. They wouldn't. I switched to Tele-Talk which has a tremendous capture buffer and had no trouble getting the files unto an ATARI Dos disk. So far, so good!!!

I converted the 3 files to LJK Dos and combined/redivided them into 2 files (My LJK RAM wouldn't hold the entire file at one time. I did this by duplicating the middle section file (under a different name) and then used [control][X] and [control][W] to "delete all after the curser" in the original and "delete all after the curser" in the duplicate. I then used the merge function to combine the first section with the first half of the middle section. The third file was then added to the last half of the middle section.

To my dismay, the text had come over the modem already formatted with right hand justification!! This meant that there was a carriage return at the end of every line and extra spaces in between words to perform the right hand justification.

Not to worry! I used [control][R] "conditional search and replace". I searched for Quadruple [spacebar] and replaced with Single [spacebar] where appropriate. I then repeated the operation for the remaining Triple and Double spaces that remained unto an ATARI Dos disk.

Now to worry! I could not find a way to search for all the extra carriage returns and replace them with a Double space, Single space or Nothing as required. I just couldn't find a way to produce the little left arrow that represents a carriage return in Letter Perfect (using the carriage return key was interpreted as a command rather than a character). [control][tab] would produce an inverse left arrow but the [Atari] key is disabled so that I couldn't change it to a normal left arrow. So... I had to do it brute force using the [control][down arrow], [control][A], [control][Z] keys to pick them up and then delete them one at a time.

If any one learns how to search for [carriage returns] and replace them with something else, please let me know.

Then I Spell checked it and linked the second file to the first by putting a [control][V]["] and the name of the second file at the end of the first file. At print time, I called for the first file to be printed. When it got to the end, it automatically called up the second file to the printer. The header and page numbering started on the first file continued right on into the second. I was somewhat concerned that it might not.

We got it signed, distributed and the original (along with a Disk copy) put in a safe deposit box until it's time for the next revision. It will be a lot less pain the next time!!! It will be even less trouble if I can get the typist to come to my computer. Maybe I should have Dale talk to her next time. Then she'll know what a sweet person I am by comparison.

If there is a message in all this, it is that "Where there is a will, there is a way". It certainly demonstrated the Power of the Atari Computer.

Dick (I'm perfect) Reaser

pluper4
May 21, 1984
PLU-PERFECT, BBS Version
by
Dick Reaser

Data Base Back-up Information.

Did you know that:

One of the fastest ways to make a back up of your data base if you only have one drive is to use the [J] option "Duplicate Disk" using "Silver Dos". You may not have to make but one disk swap since it only copies the sectors with information in them and not empty sectors.

You could even use regular Atari DOS 2.0s [J] option "Duplicate Disk" to duplicate an LJK Data Perfect Database or a Letter Perfect File?

When you "back up" a disk the Label and Report formats are transferred to the back up disk.

When you "sort" a disk the backup disk becomes the primary (sorted) disk and the original disk remains unsorted (in its original condition, sorted or not). Thus, you can have two disks with the same information on them but each disk is sorted on different criteria.

When you "sort" a disk, the backup disk need not contain all the records that the primary disk does. After the "sort" both disks will contain all the same active records. This means that you don't have to "back up" before sorting.

When you "sort" a disk with inactive (deleted) records on it, the inactive records will have been purged from the sorted (new primary) disk. This means that you do not have to "compact" a disk before sorting in order to get rid of inactive records.

When you "sort", the Label and Report formats are transferred to the "sorted" disk.

Contrary to what I've read in other ACE newsletters, it matters not which disk (first or second) you "back up to" if you have used the "Reformat" function to create a back up disk. They each take the same amount of time to fill with data using the "back up" function.

pluper5
June 30, 1984
PLU-PERFECT, BBS Version
by
Dick Reaser

Data Perfect Version 2.02

A few weeks ago, I received an offer from LJK to update my Data Perfect program from Version 1.8 to 2.02 for \$30.00. The advertised features were mainly to be able to work with double density disks, and to get a new manual which would include a "Quick Reference Summary" of the commands.

I had been making notes for some time with the hopes of putting together just such summary command list (similar to what they had done for Letter Perfect). Fortunately, I have procrastinated long enough that I won't now have to do all that typing and formatting!!!

I've had a little time to play with the new program and I like it!! It takes a little bit more of the drudgery out of the keyboard. The first thing it does is allow you to put defaults right on the disk for number of drives and density. From then on, all you have to put in is the date after the disk is booted in.

The next nice touch is that they allow use just the first letter on the menu list instead of using the [<] & [>] keys and then [return] to select a menu item. It takes a little trouble to run that curser up and down to the right spot if the menu is very long. The "first letter only" technique showed up for the first time on Spell Perfect and I liked it from the start.

The command summary takes up both sides of an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet of paper. It is pretty good, but they should have included a few examples. Guess I'll have to hand write them in on my copy. It looks like there is at least one mistake (they show [/] when I think they mean [±] and I have no idea why they throw in the "clarification"?? (esc 2). The command summary should be of tremendous help for first time or seldom users.

They have changed some of the commands but I had no trouble catching on fast. In particular, they now use just [esc] instead of [control] [A] to accept data up to the curser. It seems much more natural to me the new way, since I'm not a pianist or a typist. [control][A] now takes you to the beginning of a field (as [control] [A] takes you to the beginning of a line in Letter Perfect. They don't list [control] [A] as a command anymore, it just is there.

A powerful new feature is that you can selectively merge records from one data base to another. Before, you had to take the whole data base and then delete out what you don't want. What is now involved is the normal search criteria to select just what you want. I am sure I will be able to get a great deal of use out of this feature considering my abhorrance of typing.

The data base information created with the older version (1.8) works fine with the new version.

. However

Once again, the "literals" in any Report or Label formats do not show up when called up on the new program. The data fields are ok, but anything after a literal ["] leaves nothing, not even a blank space. The positions are there there is just nothing in them. What you have to do is edit the Report or Label and put back in the word, commas, blank spaces etc. It is actually pretty easy if you remember what you had before for format. The field data doesn't require and touch up.

This same thing happened the last time that I got an updated disk from LJK.

I haven't had a chance to try out the Double Density part of the update (still haven't wired up my new DSDD Epson drives for the ATR-8000). I'm sure that is the way to go for large data bases. Right now, they don't have the ability to convert a database from single to double density. The manual implies that there will be an update to their "File Utility" from version 1 to version 2 that will handle it. With my typing skills, I'll not bother retyping all that data just for the privilege of working in DD.

The next database I start will sure get it though.

I am clearly still in love with this **PERFECT** software. It is the most powerful stuff around. There some super upgrades for Letter Perfect available or in the mill. I can't wait to get my hands on them. Wordstar, move over!!

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